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Field studies were conducted in 1960 in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas and in Iowa to augment information on migratory workers. Faculty-student team field trips found many factors to consider in providing a constructive approach to the problems of the migrant worker. Children of the migrants are not getting the education they need to break out of the migrant pattern. Preventive health care lacks incentive because of poor living conditions. Poverty prevents curative medicine. The migrant suffers from prejudice and discrimination. Constant strain to earn a living is the main contributing factor to the plight of the migrant. Wage increases might be difficult if farm organizations and growers' associations should oppose legislation which would include farmers under the Fair Labor Practices Act.

Ways to better the situation of the migrant include the work schedule system of the Annual Workers Plan, the work of church associations, and legislation. The program in Muscatine, Iowa illustrates how cooperation between industry, church, and community can result in a comparatively successful migrant community. Crop diversification combined with industrial jobs would form continuous employment opportunities for migrants. Regional planing can contribute to stable communities. An annotated bibliography compiled according to general studies, civil rights and legal status, housing and community relations, health and safety, education and child labor, activities of private agencies, state programs, and newsletters and periodical bulletins is included.

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"Each year there are 4.2 million persons who work for wages in American agriculture. Nearly half of these are casual workers . . . . "

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Migratory Agricultural Workers in the United States

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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By—

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. John H. Burma is Professor and Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and Chairman of the Division of Social Studies at Grinnell College. He has long been interested in the field of minority groups, especially Mexican Americans, as evidenced by one of his books, Spanish Speaking Groups in the United States, and a number of shorter published studies in this field. In 1960 Dr. Burma served as a contributing author for the White House Conference on Children and Youth in the field of Mexican American Youth. He served as project director for the present study.

Miss Jorgenson and Mr. Williams undertook this research project as Grinnell students under that college's program of independent study for honors. Miss Jorgenson received her Bachelor of Arts Degree with Honors in June 1960, and Mr. Williams completed his undergraduate work in January 1961 and expects to receive his degree with honors in June 1961. During the summer of 1960 Dr. Burma and Mr. Williams made an economic, social, and educational study of much of the north central area of New Mexico.

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PREFACE

The research upon which this report is based was conducted during 1959 and 1960. Basically the study consisted of the drawing together of pertinent information from a multitude of sources, augmented by field studies conducted in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas in the spring of 1960 and in Iowa during that summer.

The authors wish to express their sincere gratitude to the Ford Foundation whose grant to Grinnell College for joint student-faculty research in public affairs financed this study, and also to the Faculty Committee of the College charged with the administration of the Ford Foundation funds. Without such aid and cooperation this study would not have been possible.

This study resulted in formal study reports totaling some four hundred and fifty pages. The present publication does not pretend to summarize all this material, but rather is limited to the presentation of material not elsewhere readily available or the analysis and evaluation of other reports. The extensive information which the authors would like to include from other sources is prohibited by the limitations of space, not by the present authors' lack of indebtedness to and interest in other presentations.

Grinnell College
Grinnell, Iowa

JMJ, DEW, JHB

MIGRATORY AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN THE UNITED STATES

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MIGRATORY AGRICULTURAL WORKERS
IN THE UNITED STATES

INTRODUCTION

Farm Labor Force

Each year there are 4.2 million persons who work for wages in American agriculture. Nearly half of these are casual workers, engaged primarily in other occupations and spending less than 25 days in agricultural labor annually. Of the 2.3 million so engaged for more than 25 days each year, only about 700,000 are considered as regular farm workers, working more than 150 days per year. This leaves 1.6 million persons who work at farm labor between 25 and 150 days each year.

The average annual wage for all hired farm workers is less than $1,000. For the 1.6 million who work between 25 and 150 days the annual wage averages about $600, including both farm and non-farm income.[1] This places the workers who help to produce our crops at the bottom of our economic scale, the lowest-paid of any occupational category in the nation.

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[1] ----- "The American Farm Worker," Economic Trends and Outlook, AFL-CIO Economic Policy Committee, May-June, 1960.

It should be noted above that the lower limit of the top classification of farm workers is 150 days. This is considered "regular" farm employment. It is doubtful that the term "regular" would be so loosely construed in any other industry. It might seem that hourly wage scales should compensate, at least partially, for the low number of work days, since much lost time is largely inevitable due to travel time, inclement weather, etc. Perhaps they should but they do not. On an hourly basis also, the agricultural laborer is at the bottom of the scale. The latest figures available show that in 1957 the average cash farm wage rate was 73 cents per hour. By comparison, laundry workers received $1.09, persons engaged in retail trade $1.65, in manufacturing $2.07, and in building construction $2.96.[2]

All this would be moderated somewhat if it could be reported that the economic lot of the farm laborers was improving relatively; that is, if his buying power or, in other words, his standard of living, was on the rise. In the decade from 1947 to 1957 the hourly rate for the farm worker increased 33 percent. However, even with this increase he was further behind those with whom we have compared him. Wage rates for laundry workers rose 42 percent during the same period, retail trade 63 percent, manufacturing 67 percent, and construction 76 percent.[3] No matter what means of comparison is used, the worker in agriculture appears at the bottom of the scale.

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[2] ----- Farm Labor Fact Book, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1959, p. 190.

At the same time, figures indicate that a sharp rise has occurred in the output of farm workers. This is shown in Table I below. It is readily apparent that while wage rates for agricultural workers increased six percent from 1945 to 1959, their output per manhour rose an estimated 125 percent during the same period. In effect, the worker's share based on his contribution to the growing and marketing of farm produce dropped to about half what it was in 1945. This is also reflected in the change in farm labor cost expressed as a percentage of total production costs. In 1945 this comprised 18 percent of total production costs;

Table I Farm Hourly Wages Compared to Output Per Manhour, 1945 as Index.

	Wage Rate	Output
1945	100	100
1950	87	133
1955	95	177
1959	106	225*

*Preliminary.
From Economic Report of the President, 1960. U. S. Department of Agriculture. Quoted in "The American Farm Worker," article published in Economic Trends and Outlook, AFL-CIO Economic Policy Committee.

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[3] *Ibid.*, p. 190.

by 1959 it was down to nine percent.[4] Admittedly, other production costs may have risen during this period so as to offset this reduced percentage. Yet, with labor such a small part of total production costs, an increase in labor expenditures would not necessarily effect consumer prices to any great degree.

Migrants

It is estimated that, altogether, a million migrants derive their maintenance primarily from agricultural wages. Of these, 400,000 are workers living within the borders of this country, and 150,000 are their dependents. Another 450,000 are foreign workers, mostly Mexican citizens who are brought into the country as contract laborers under provisions of a treaty with the United States of Mexico, known in this country as Public Law 78.[5] There are also some 15,000 Puerto Ricans who are United States citizens and who enter either under government auspices or on private contract.

Of the domestic migrants, the majority are Texas Mexicans. Some came into the United States from Mexico, either legally or as "wet-backs" during times of more liberal enforcement of immigration laws, and have since been

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[4] ----- "The American Farm Worker," op. cit.

[5] ----- Farm Labor Fact Book, op. cit., p. 111.

"legalized." Others trace their families back several generations before reaching the progenitor who first brought the family north of the Rio Grande.

There are also Southern whites and Negroes who at one time operated marginal farms, and who, as the line of marginality rose, found themselves unable to maintain their families. Knowing nothing but farming and unable to find full-time local employment in that field, they joined the ranks of the migrants.

There are a few who think of themselves primarily as factory workers, persons who hold unskilled positions and are quickly subject to lay-offs during slack seasons. At these times they, too, join the harvest crews.

Although the migrant's numbers may not be impressive when compared to the total population of the nation, their problems are manifold, far out of proportion to their numbers. These problems are so interrelated and involve so many vicious cycles that it is difficult to pinpoint and correct primary causes.

The basic reason for the existence of migratory agricultural labor as a phenomenon is simple. There is a surplus of farm labor in some areas at the same time that a shortage exists in other areas. Suitability of different soils to various crops, variations in available moisture either through rainfall or irrigation across the length and breadth of the nation, duration of the growing season, and proximity to markets, all determine what types of crops the farmers will raise. All these factors contribute to a variation of harvest times from early spring to late fall. The crop raised also has a bearing upon the amount of hand labor required for cultivation and harvest. Some crops require a minimal amount. It is possible, for example, to raise corn entirely by machine from the moment the seed is poured into the planter boxes until the crop is cribbed. Toward the other extreme, strawberries require hand labor from planting through all the operations of caring for the vines, to picking. Crops that require extensive hand labor, and particularly those which mature with a degree of uniformity, call for large numbers of harvest workers for short periods of time. For the rest of the year the grower, with perhaps a small number of regular employees, can care for the crop himself. Only in a very few places can local labor be depended upon to meet this seasonal need. Multiply this high, short-term peak demand by thousands of farmers across the country, spread it through half to three-quarters of the year, and the need for migrant workers becomes obvious.

When the importance of migratory labor to our agricultural economy, and in turn its importance to the nation, are considered, it may appear to the casual observer that the migrants are in an excellent position to gain and maintain their rights. However, the very fact of their mobility and their lack of cohesiveness, among other factors, militate against their ability to exert the economic pressures which are necessary for gaining these rights.

On the other hand, the growers have formed associations for their own protection, in many cases without much interest in the protection of those they employ. While an outgrowth of such organization has been an improvement of migrant housing, this has been more often to meet government requirements than out of any altruistic motives to help the migrant. The ease with which the problems of the migrants have escaped sufficient attention to be corrected can be seen when one finds that "something like 5% of all farms in America spend 70% of all the money spent on hiring (agricultural) help."[6]

Not the smallest contributing factor to the migrants' difficulties is poor or almost complete lack of education. Those least qualified for more permanent work are the most likely to migrate. They are also least likely to feel the need of education for their children. As a result the childred are taken from school to go along on the migrant routes. After several seasons the young people find themselves so far behind in school that they despair of ever finishing high school and drop out as soon as local laws allow. They are than as unfitted as their parents were before them to compete for more desirable work, and eventually find themselves also in the migrant streams.

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[6] Secretary of Labor James P. Mitchell, Migrant Labor, The National Responsibility, Speech Text of Address to Conference on Migrant Labor of the Catholic Council on Working Life, Chicago, November 22, 1959, p. 6.

In most states migrant workers do not at present enjoy the benefits of minimum wage laws, unemployment insurance, or workman's compensation. Frequently they have no guarantees of an opportunity to work after traveling 100 or 1000 miles from their homes. Housing facilities available to them are usually far from the best, and too often "...below minimum standards of health and decency."[7] When emergencies arise migrants seldom are eligible for welfare aid because of residence requirements. Public sentiment frequently is against them in the very areas where their contribution to the economy is most urgently needed. They are commonly victims of unequal law enforcement and prejudiced courts, yet in such instances are ignorant of their rights and powerless to secure them if they are aware of them.

Migrant Streams

Since the movements of the migrants follow certain general paths but no rigid or even well-defined routes are in evidence, the number of migrant streams existing in the country is largely a matter of interpretation. From three to six of these routes may be defined. At the lower extreme they are East Coast, Central, and West Coast. Paul Jacobs outlines six.[8] There is first the Atlantic Coast Stream, involving approximately 60,000 domestic workers, mostly Negroes. It begins in Florida and moves northward into New York, New Jersey, and the New England States. Also included in this stream are a majority of the Puerto Rican contract laborers who come to the United States. The people of this stream work on truck farms in Florida, in cotton and vegetables in the Middle Atlantic States, and fruit and vegetables north of that region.

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[7] ----- Report to the President on Domestic Migratory Farm Labor, Washington, D. C., Government Printing Office, 1960, p. 13-14.

The second route is known as the Sugar Beet Stream. It begins in Texas and moves up into the North Central and Mountain States. It is comprised almost exclusively of Mexican Americans, about 75,000 in number.

Third is the Wheat and Small-Grain Stream, beginning in Texas and progressing northward across the Wheat Belt, even going into Canada. About 50,000 Mexican Americans are involved here. One rather unique aspect of this stream among those of the domestic workers is the almost complete lack of dependents. These men travel nearly exclusively as combine crews, work which is too heavy for women and children.[9] In the other streams families of domestic migrants usually travel together.

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[8] Paul Jacobs, "The Forgotten People," The Reporter, January 1959, New York.

[9] ----- Farm Labor Fact Book, op. cit., p. 115.

Fourth is the Southwest Cotton Harvest Stream, another of Texas origin. Starting from the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and with reinforcements from Mississippi, it moves through Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Southern California. Something over 100,000 people are involved in this stream, mostly Mexican Americans with a sprinkling of Negroes.

The fifth stream begins in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Tennessee, moving from these states north and west to harvest vegetables and fruits. Some 30,000 workers, mostly whites, travel in this stream. It has experienced the least growth of any of the streams in recent years and the compilers of the _Farm Labor Fact Book_ for the U. S. Department of Labor in 1959 did not deem it important enough to mention as a major stream.[10]

The sixth and last important movement is the West Coast Stream. There are over 120,000 people with no central starting point who move irregularly through the West Coast States harvesting fruits, nuts, and vegetables. Whites, Negroes, and Mexican Americans make up this rather nebulous pattern, with the latter holding some numerical dominance.

Employers of the Migrants

The farmers who employ migrant workers also have their problems. Every planting is a calculated risk. Large scale farmers today have a heavy capital investment upon which they are entitled to a return. To realize a profit they must each year make a further investment in seed, fertilizer, fuel, sometimes water for irrigation, and labor, both their own and that which they hire. After the planting and cultivation are done the vagaries of the weather and the markets largely determine the financial return. It behooves the grower, therefore, to be as conservative as possible in his investment in each year's crops, including labor costs.

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[10] _Ibid._, p. 115.

However, there is evidence that many growers have a callous disregard for their seasonal employees which far exceeds the exigencies of sound farm management. This should not be taken to mean that all employers of migrants are unconcerned about the problems of their workers. There are throughout the nation farmers who are not only businessmen but also humanitarians. They have taken the view that they and those who work for them are not competitors for the financial return from the crops they raise, but are partners of a sort in the production of farm commodities. Growers in the latter group are not trying to raise themselves by stepping on the heads of the workers, but are attempting to better the position of all who make their living from the soil. Between these extremes lies the great majority of growers who employ migrant labor. It is toward this great middle group that efforts toward amelioration of the migrants' problems through grower education should be beamed for maximum effectiveness.

Annual Worker Plan

In the maze of unsolved problems facing persons concerned with migrant labor, one bright spot is visible. This is the loosely-structured and highly flexible program known as the Annual Worker Plan. Although not in any sense a universal cure for all the ailments of this segment of American society, it does offer aid both to growers and to migrants. Through this plan an employer is able to have the number of workers he needs at the time that he needs them, not too many or too few, not several days before the beginning of his harvest, or after his crop has begun to spoil in the fields. Workers are able to travel directly from one job to another without unnecessary delay or extra travel. For them the plan means more work days during the season, and hence, an improvement in income.

Because crops vary from one to another in the time of their maturity, and the end of the growing season varies with climate, at any given moment there are supply states and demand states, but within a matter of a week or even less, a particular state may shift from one category to the other. Without advance planning many migrants must simply move on after a job is finished, hoping to find another further north. With neither committment nor connections he may search for several days before locating a grower who is ready to hire him. The grower who must depend on such labor for his harvest is likewise in a precarious position. The object of the Annual Worker Plan is to correlate the needs of the grower and the worker, minimizing for both the uncertainties of the harvest season.

The plan originated among ten eastern seaboard states in 1949 when representatives familiar with the technicalities of their own local farm labor needs met to formulate a system by which each state could gain some idea of the number of migrants working in the other states and the approximate dates that their tasks there would be completed. By 1954 there were 33 states cooperating in the program, serving approximately 100,000 domestic migrants. In 1958 virtually all the states participated and about 145,000 migrants were involved.[11] It is estimated that this figure will be 200,000 for 1960.[12]

Prior to the inception of the Annual Worker Plan it had been the practice of large growers and processors who contracted with farmers to grow vegetables, to send recruiters into the South during the winter to contact crew leaders in preparation for the coming season. However, only estimates of the numbers of workers needed later and the time of the need, could be given. The crew leader, for his part, could not always be sure of how many his crew would include at such an advanced date. Hence arrangements made under these circumstances were extremely tentative and offered little assurance either to the employers or to the employees. This structure is of some use, however, and has been incorporated into the Annual Worker Plan.

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[11] Ibid., p. 120.

[12] Report to the President on Domestic Migratory Farm Labor, op. cit., p. 11.

Each year, prior to the beginning of the migrant movement, employment service representatives from the states involved meet together in the South, and along with various crew leaders, work out tentative work schedules for the season. Each representative knows approximately his state's needs in regard to time and numbers, and by exchanging this information an over-all picture of labor needs can be developed. A rational plan can then be worked out with the crew leaders for the most efficient use of their crews. As indicated in the preceding paragraph, privately employed recruiters are encouraged to take part in this planning. As the season progresses toward harvest time in each area, labor need estimates can be revised with increasing accuracy. Such revisions are passed along through the employment service network and crew schedules are altered accordingly. Complicated and unwieldly as the plan may seem at first glance, careful work on estimating and scheduling make it successful and well worth while. It is certainly preferable to the chaotic alternative of no planning.

There is nothing coercive in the plan; growers, workers, and states participate on a purely voluntary basis. Cooperating organizations and individuals agree that there will be no recruiting in any area prior to the end of its peak demand season, although workers are free to leave an area whenever they desire. If they find the terms of employment unsatisfactory in the location to which they have been assigned, and an agreement cannot be reached, they may move on to another place.

Besides the Annual Worker Plan, and to an extent augmenting it, is the information service established by the state and federal governments to answer the questions of workers regarding not only employment opportunities and conditions, but also such things as child care facilities available to them and special laws with which they must comply in traveling through a given state. Information centers of a temporary or portable nature are established in areas where migrants are hired, with well-marked routes from main highways leading to them. In addition to the regular employees hired for these services, approximately 3,000 volunteers give of their time and effort each year.

An interesting and perhaps pertinent observation is that the problem of planning and scheduling of the work of the migrants is one of the most nebulous of the many problems which they face. It is a problem which could not be solved simply by the passage of legislation, and which changes not only from year to year, but with every passing day of the harvest season, from the deep South where the season begins to the potato fields of Maine. Yet this problem has been reduced greatly by the application of rational thinking and effort. It should serve, therefore, to encourage a concerted attack on the more easily definable difficulties of some half million of our citizens.

THE TEXAS FIELD TRIP

Research Method

The plan of research of the faculty-student team responsible for this report was first to locate, acquire, and analyze as much as possible of the available information on migratory labor. This was a major portion of the project, and properly so. Solely secondary research leaves much to be desired however, and through the generosity of the Ford Foundation it was possible for the team to make personal ofservation of the life and work of agricultural migrants.

Texas was chosen as the site of field observation for several reasons. First, the Texas stream is the largest in the United States, and is the source of supply for the Midwest, the region which had the most personal interest for the research team. A second factor considered was the limitation of time on the field trip. During the period available for primary research, (late March and early April of 1960) the migratory movement in Texas would be in its beginning stages, allowing the research team to observe both home base and migratory conditions. A final factor stemmed from the interest which the entire team had in Spanish speaking Americans who, with minor exceptions, make up the middle stream of migratory agricultural labor.

Following the allocation of funds for the trip from a Ford Foundation grant to the College for student-faculty research projects, plans were formulated for a survey of a four county area which borders on the Rio Grande River. Interviews with state employment officials, private agency personnel concerned with migrants, employers, crew leaders, and the workers seemed desirable and the first portion of the field observation was organized around these activities. The second portion of the field study involved observing the living and working conditions of the migrants, and the whole process of harvesting, from the field to the railroad cars which carry the processed crops north.

Field Study

The first step in the field observation consisted of fairly lengthy non-directive interviews in Austin, Texas, with the head of the Texas Employment Commission (TEC), the Executive Director of the Texas Good Neighbor Commission, and the Executive Secretary of the Governor's Committee on Migratory Labor. All these persons and especially the TEC head were helpful and cooperative.

These interviews advanced one of the team's hypotheses to the status of a theory, which we later came to consider a proven fact: The Texas migratory labor problem is complicated, both economically and socially, with many facets. There is no one story; a many-sided and complex series of interrelated factors combine to create a situation which cannot be solved by any one formula. The problems are an inextricable intermixture of social, economic, educational, political and other factors.

In any study of migration, among the first questions one asks are, "Why do people migrate? Is this a necessary phenomenon?" The Texas investigation pointed up sharply some answers to these questions. In the first place, the overwhelming majority of migrants with whom contact was made said that they would prefer to remain year-round in one location, and that they preferred living in the Valley, if it was at all possible. They believed, however, that it was necessary to migrate because jobs were not available which would pay a living wage. This bore out the conclusions previously reached by the team as the result of research in secondary sources concerned with migratory labor in general and the Texas Rio Grande Valley in particular.

When these questions were posed to a high-ranking official of TEC, his reply in essence was that the workers think that they will be able to earn better wages by migrating, and that they will be able to obtain more work. Because of this, a labor shortage exists in the Valley and throughout Texas during certain seasons of the year. According to TEC estimates, it would be possible to employ most of those who migrate during all but the months of December and January. If such a situation existed, one of the major problems of the migrants, his low educational status, could be alleviated within two or three generations.

Accepting these factors, it then becomes apparent that a major "real" reason for migration lies in what is referred to as the "going wage." TEC estimated the "going wage" in the Valley about 50¢ per hour, and that the average worker makes about $900 by working possibly five months. A family's income obviously varies according to the number of employable members, and whether they work full or part time.

Interviews with the migrants showed that their perception of the situation was somewhat different and even worse than that presented by the TEC representatives. According to their story the prevailing wage in the Valley ranged from 35¢ an hour for pulling carrots, to 45¢ an hour for driving a tractor or irrigating. The worker was expected to provide his own lunch, and to work ten hours a day or more. By moving North, he may obtain wages of 75¢ to $1 per hour.

The migrants interviewed saw the imported Mexican national laborer as one of the chief obstacles to obtaining a higher wage. According to Public Law 78, Mexican nationals or braceros can be employed by American farmers and growers when a labor shortage exists in an area. The Texas migrants seemed to believe that an artificial labor shortage frequently is created in an area by the growers, through their refusal to pay wages which exceed 35¢ an hour to domestic workers, who consequently migrate to earn higher wages. This, at first, was difficult to comprehend, since Public Law 78 states that the minimum wage for braceros is 50¢ per hour, and provides that the employer maintain housing for the workers which meets government standards. The reported answer to the frequent preference for bracero labor lies in the report that the bracero, who is a foreigner in a strange land and under contract and hence more likely to stay on a job, will work under conditions which the domestic worker rejects. Eager to earn money, he will work on Sundays, for long hours, and in rain or heat. He is living on the farm, and is available at any hour. The local worker, on the other hand, if he remains in the Valley for full time work, lives in his home. Growers complain that he will not work when he is needed, and that if he is on an hourly rate, he proves to be extremely slow. They claim that workers must be ready when they need them, and willing to work under adverse conditions if it is necessary in the harvest of a crop. In the long run, the bracero labor is cheaper, it is said, especially if it means that the grower can harvest his crop at exactly the right time.

From the presentation thus far a casual reader might jump to the conclusion that the answer to alleviating the depressed condition of the Texas migrant lies in eliminating the Mexican labor, and organizing the workers in the Valley to promote higher wages. The situation is far more complicated than this. Attempts have been made and are being made on the part of TEC and the U. S. Employment Security Commission to limit bracero labor to those places where a labor shortage actually does exist. Yet the situation in those areas with regard to domestic labor has not improved significantly.

The crux of the matter is that, throughout the United States, growers who use considerable labor try to keep their labor costs down. They will use local labor, migratory labor, braceros, or machines, whichever is cheapest at any particular time and place. Machines have enough inherent advantages that unless human labor can be hired more cheaply, the grower tends to turn to machines. This makes a built-in limitation on the rise of farm labor wages.

So far this report has dealt mainly with the migrants' side of the story. There is also the side of the grower to be considered. During the team's visit to a packing shed which was processing carrots for shipment north, the severity of the conditions facing the grower became evident. While viewing the truckloads of carrots being washed, topped, iced and sacked, we all speculated on the price for a 48 lb. bag of carrots delivered into a railroad car. The guesses were all far off, for the price was 15 cents! Later we found out that a 50 lb. bag of fine onions loaded on the truck brought fifty cents. Lettuce had done well at $1.50 a crate, but dozens of fields of carrots were observed which had been harvested for cattle feed, plowed under, or were waiting to be plowed under. It is true, however, that two and sometimes three crops can be produced on the same land each year.

Education

Prominent among the problems of America's migrants is the vicious circle of their inadequate education. Those persons least able to find other work because of educational handicaps tend to be most likely to migrate. They also tend to be least likely to appreciate the value of education for their children. Further, economic privation frequently makes it necessary, at least in the eyes of the migrants, for the children to work with their parents. Those children too young to make much contribution to the family's income often play around the edges of the fields under the non-too-watchful eyes of their parents, or sometimes tend their younger brothers and sisters. Many of the communities where migrants are employed for various reasons do not make any particular effort to enroll and educate migrant children. As a result of these numerous factors, the typical migrant child soon falls far behind his Anglo age-peers and eventually drops out of school completely, no better equipped educationally than his parents.

The problems which face the Texas school districts in various migratory labor areas were discussed at some length during the interview with the Chairman of the Texas Good Neighbor Commission. According to him, the areas which are most affected are West Texas during the cotton harvest season in October and November, and the Valley home base area from late November until March. It was pointed out that in West

Texas enrollment would increase by as much as 200% if the migrant children were enrolled in the schools during their short stay in the area. Consequently, most of the children are not enrolled in school until they reach their home area. At this time, the home base area schools absorb a number of children which frequently exceeds the non-migratory population by 200 - 300 percent. These children typically are retarded about two years in the primary grades.

The Edinburg-Ed Couch-Elsa school district is an example of a district which is doing a good job of absorbing the migratory child and adapting its teaching methods to his needs. In these three towns, an auxiliary corps of teachers is hired on a six-months basis to help during the peak enrollment periods. The district has instituted a special program of education which centers around vocational aspects and the immediate, practical needs of the child and his family, such as English, reading, and arithmetic. In some schools bi-lingual teachers have been hired, although this is not yet a part of the general plan.

Through the migrant ministry, arrangements were made to talk at some length with the principal of Horton Elementary School in Weslaco, Texas. Horton School has an enrollment of over 500 during peak seasons, and is located in the Latin district of town. According to the principal this school is one of four all-Latin schools in Weslaco. There is one Anglo school across the tracks. The principal stated that the enrollment in the fall was about 200 and that he started the school term with 14 teachers. During the year an additional 6 teachers were hired on 6 months contracts to handle the influx. Although all the children are Latin Americans, only 4 teachers in this school are Latin American. Horton School has a new physical plant with 8 classrooms. During the overflow period, barracks are used. Because of broad variations in scholastic attainment the rooms of the school are divided into achievement level classes. Consequently the lower achievement classes are the most crowded, and the children who need the most help are the least likely to receive individual attention. Before a child is placed in first grade he spends at least one semester in what is called a "beginner class" where he learns English. The next semester, or the next year, he is placed in the first grade. Curriculum in the school is set up in such a way that subjects such as science and social studies are emphasized during the periods when the fewest children are enrolled. The emphasis from late November to late March is on reading, communication skills and simple arithmetic. Attendance at school during the home stay appears to be good; the principal showed us his attendance records for the preceding week, and absenses were not excessive. He stated that the staff kept a close watch on absence, and that he personally investigated any absence which exceeded three days.

The Weslaco school system has one junior high school and one senior high school. Both of these schools are integrated. The seventh grade is apparently the making or breaking place for the Latin child. According to the principal, no child is passed from the 7th grade who does not seem capable of finishing high school. In Weslaco the high school graduating class is normally about 120, and only about 15% of the students are Latins. The average first grade total for the town is between 600 and 700. Of these one hundred and fifty or fewer are Anglo. According to these figures, only about one of every 30 Latin children completes the 12th grade. Nearly all Anglo children do so.

Weslaco planned to hold a summer session in 1960 in two of the Latin schools, offering beginner classes in the hope of being able to start more children directly in the first grade. If this program proves successful, there is a possibility that summer schools will be conducted throughout the Latin section of the system in the future.

Several informants pointed up the difficulties which the school faces in placing the migrant child in the proper grade level, and indicated that attempts to send records with the children met with little success, since it is sometimes several months before the child is enrolled in a new system, and few families manage to save the records.

Reportedly there is a growing trend on the part of migrant families either to leave their children with relatives to finish the school year, or to remain in the Valley until school recesses in the spring. A hopeful sign is the gradually increasing number of Latin students in the high schools.

Hand in hand with the education of Spanish-speaking migrant children goes the need for establishing programs for adult education and for changing the status of the migrants. One of the major organizations concerning itself with this problem is the Migrant Ministry. Through the courtesy of a representative of the Texas Migrant Ministry and a field social worker for the National Council of Churches, Division of Home Missions, we were permitted on various occasions to visit the Citizenship Education classes at Weslaco, Texas. These classes are a part of a larger program which is a special three-year action research project, sponsored by the Schwarzhaupt Foundation and the National Council of Churches. The importance of the over-all program is such that it is desirable to elaborate further on it before discussing the classes themselves.

The purpose of the Migrant Citizenship Education Project is to determine the best "methods by which migratory agricultural workers can be helped to function more fully as American citizens through more effective use of their rights and more appropriate assumption of their responsibilities."[13] The program is based on six principles:

1. Making opportunities for practice of good citizenship

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[13] Progress Report, October 1959, Migrant Citizenship Education Project, Mimeographed.

within the community itself, 2. Attempting to alter the isolation of the migrant in the community, 3. Educational activities directed toward both the migrant and the community, 4. Active participation in educational opportunities, 5. Opening of communications and other relationships between migrants and community members, 6. Persuading the community to take the first step.[14]

According to the field social worker, the situation in Weslaco was ripe for such a project. Weslaco has a Latin population of about seven thousand, four thousand of whom migrate each year. Within the Latin section of the community there was a small nucleus of migrant workers who had made an unsuccessful attempt the preceding winter to communicate to the Anglo community and to their employers, their interests in year-round employment at home. In December of 1959, the field social worker entered the community and began his work with this nucleus. Under his unobtrusive leadership, the Weslaco Citizenship Education Association was formed.

A representative of the Texas Migrant Ministry had been assigned to the project as a worker to obtain community organization assistance and provide any help which was needed in community relations. The field social worker represented the second part of a dual approach. As a Spanish-American, his ethnic background was similar to that of the migrants in the community, permitting him to approach the migrant population directly with research and educational activities.

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[14] Ibid.

A basic principle of group social work states that work with people must begin at their level, with their concerns, and proceed from there. In practice, this normally is most difficult, but in the case of the Weslaco project the group workers seemed to have achieved this objective. At the meeting of the board of directors of the Association it was immediately apparent that while the group very much appreciated the help which they were receiving from the group worker, they were unaware that the Association was not solely their own creation.

During the early weeks of his stay, the group worker had surveyed the needs and interests of the group. The nucleus with which he was concerned was vitally interested in achieving some voice in community affairs. At a conference with the Grinnell research team, one of the group stated that there were many things which needed to be done, but that the group had decided that they must begin by awakening the members of the Latin community to their role as citizens. Hence the Association was born, and the people themselves began to think in terms of what they could do to promote a political awakening.

Early in 1960 a meeting was held in the High School to introduce the program to the Latin population. Attendance was good, and it was announced that temporary officers would be elected at the next bi-monthly meeting. Meanwhile, those who attended were asked to vote as to whether or not they felt that the organization should be established on a permanent basis. Only three people out of the two or three hundred present voted against the plan. At this meeting, a constitution committee was appointed, and plans were made to have a speaker at the third meeting.

At each of the following meetings, one major item of business was taken up, to insure interest in attendance, a necessity if the Association was to succeed. Permanent officers were elected following the adoption of the constitution. In connection with a get-out-the-vote campaign two meetings were held at which the political candidates for school board and for the primary election spoke. According to the president, all of the candidates were invited to one of the two meetings, and all except two attended.

Two projects were planned by the Association Board, and both were in full swing when the research team visited in March. The first of these projects was a drive to get those who were citizens to pay their poll taxes, and to vote in the April elections. The nucleus, which later for the most part became the Board of Directors of the Association, began a door-to-door campaign in January to urge those who were citizens to pay their poll taxes, explaining what influence the Latin group could have if they used it. Although the group was unable to give any figures on the results of this campaign, they seemed to feel that results had been very successful in this part of the project. Step two involved a get-out-the-vote campaign which was in progress during March. Members of the group called on every family within the Latin district and once again urged them to show their interest in their community by voting in the school board elections on April 2. It was interesting to note that only a few of the members of the Association Board were themselves citizens.

The second project which the Association undertook was the Citizenship Education Classes. A surprising discovery was that the nucleus group, which had shown such interest in staying within the Valley and in Weslaco, was composed predominately of non-citizens, whose children for the most part were citizens. Having realized that the first step which they must take to achieve better community relations and to raise their standard of living lay in making their voice heard, a plan evolved for Citizenship Education Classes which would prepare the Latin population for the Citizenship Examinations which were to be held in April. The social worker assigned to relating the project to the community made the original contact with the school board, and obtained their cooperation in establishing a site where the classes and Association meetings could be held. Teachers were recruited from the local school system and from non-teachers.

The original plan was to hold classes each Friday night for eight weeks. An enrollment of over 275 made it necessary to form a second section, meeting on Tuesday night. Not all of the people who signed up for the classes were qualified to begin the citizenship course. Many were illiterate. Others read only Spanish. Because of this, five types of classes were established: Citizenship Education in English, for those who had progressed far enough in their education so that it appeared that they might qualify to pass the naturalization test shortly; Citizenship Education in Spanish, for those who were over 65 and hence were qualified to take the examinations orally in Spanish; and beginning, intermediate, and advanced English courses for those who at present could not qualify for either of the other courses. The group hoped to be able to continue these classes in 1961.

The Grinnell research team were the first outsiders to visit the classes, and the only Anglos, with the exception of one social worker and one teacher. The reception the team received was enthusiastic and friendly. Each teacher "showed off" his favorite or star pupil. The students ranged in age up to seventy-five years. They were clean, and obviously dressed for the occasion. Above all, it was apparent that they wanted to learn. A tired-looking man, perhaps a little shabbier than most, was writing and rewriting his name. A mother was taking a test which involved translating from Spanish to English, and was being coached by her small daughter, who appeared to be about eight. A middle-aged woman was reading from one of the basic readers provided by the immigration service at a cost of 50¢ to the student, "I go to school. I want to learn. I come to school with my friends. The teacher helps me to learn. I will learn to read at school." In the citizenship education class the students were learning about the United States Cabinet structure.

Following the visit to the classes on the first night, the research team was invited to attend a meeting of the Board of Directors which was being held to discuss the progress of the get-out-the-vote campaign. The meeting, which lasted about three hours, was held in the Association office, located in a commercial garage owned by the President of the Association. Since the Association was first organized the office had been expanded to give meeting space for twenty to thirty people. The members laughingly said that any day the proprietor would have to move his garage into this smaller room and allow them to have his working room for their ever-expanding membership. The group worker reported in a later conference that the members had been embarrassed about the condition of their meeting place, and that as a result of this visit from outsiders, one of the members had donated paint, and the group planned to redecorate it.

The atmosphere at the beginning of the visit to the garage was strained. A communication barrier existed since only a few of the members of the group were fluent enough in their English to feel at ease with us. The team's knowledge of Spanish was also limited. By the end of an hour, however, the ice was broken, and for the first time it seemed that the team and the Board were really talking about the essence of the problems which the migrants face. The members answered questions readily and eagerly told of the plans which they had for their organization. Already they were expanding into new areas. In addition to their original committees, they now had a welfare committee and a social committee. The welfare committee was designed as a liaison committee between the social welfare agencies and the migrants. The committee had already made it possible for an elderly man without funds to be admitted to a hospital which up to that time normally required assurance of payment before admitting a Latin patient. Various members of the committee had acted as attendants for the old man throughout his stay in the hospital, although this type of service was not in the original design of the committee.

The social committee had recently organized and sponsored a dance in the Latin section of town, the first which had ever been so sponsored in the area. The Association had sold hamburgers and hot dogs at the dance, and had made a sizeable sum of money for the organization. Another dance modeled more or less after a fiesta was being planned as an all-day affair for later in the spring.

Eventually it appeared that enough rapport had been gained to ask some leading questions. The answer were essentially those which one would expect from migrant workers. These people realize that the only way they will advance is through education and through communication with the Anglo community. They are concerned with fair employment. One of the Vice-Presidents of the group described in detail his plight. This man was a high school graduate and had spent three years in the army as a clerk-typist. Currently he was unable to find any job except in agriculture. He sought a way to find a better job, but no one was willing even to give him a chance. Another Vice-President (almost everyone was a vice-president or a chairman of a committee) was an agricultural laborer, but had skills in other lines. He was a short-order cook of several years' experience. He also had worked for a railroad and currently was receiving an unemployment check each month for a little over one hundred dollars. The previous day he had accepted a job driving a tractor, and had gone to the field. Upon his arrival he asked the foreman what his wage would be. The answer was $4.50 for a day of over ten hours. At this rate the man could not afford to take the job; he was making more by accepting his railroad unemployment check. No one in the area would hire him as a cook, despite his reported efforts to find a job all over the Valley.

These people were outspoken in their criticism of the bracero program, and hoped on a long term basis to work for the repeal of Public Law 78. As the situation stood at that time, they felt that they could not afford to stay in the Valley. One man, a crew leader whom we also interviewed at a later date, frankly admitted that one very substantial reason why they must move on was the fact that they were in debt because of the slack season, and that it was necessary to move North and earn the money to pay off this winter's bills so that it would be possible to receive credit during the next winter. He stated that the members of his crew, at least, normally operated under this plan, and that with very few exceptions, all debts were paid when the crew returned to Texas in late November. Both the group workers reported later that this was a frequent practice.

The answers to the questions asked about education were not very encouraging. According to the fry-cook vice-president, obtaining a high school diploma was extremely difficult for a Latin student. His own daughter who was now in the 8th grade had spent two and one-half years in the seventh grade, the year which the school principal had previously mentioned to us as the making or breaking point for the Latin student. This man felt that the education which the Latin schools had given to his daughter was not at all comparable to that which was available in the Anglo schools. Nonetheless, the group stated that there were several Latin students in this year's graduating class, and that they hoped to establish a scholarship fund to send a student to college the next year, to become a teacher.

Housing

Following the meeting that night the team had an opportunity to see the Latin residential district in Weslaco. Many of the migrants own their own homes. From the outside, these houses look reasonably nice. They were not pretentious, but were fairly well kept, considering the incomes of their occupants. A further opportunity to observe housing, both good and bad, came during the two days spent touring the four county area with a representative of the TEC office. For the most part, the housing in the area of the Valley for both domestic migrants and braceros was better than one might expect from the literature on the subject. Quarters were very small, and there were no inside plumbing facilities. Water was usually obtained from an outside spigot, but most of the larger settlements did provide shower rooms. In general it appeared that these houses would be adequate for temporary living. It is entirely possible, however, that since the tour was guided by an official from the TEC office that what was seen was not a representative sample. One stop was made to look into a bracero housing development which was currently unoccupied. The interior was most unattractive: dirt floors, torn screens, narrow bunk beds extremely close together, and shutter type windows without glass. The building was roofed with galvanized iron and on even a spring day the temperature inside was stifling. This area employs the greatest numbers of braceros in July, August and September.

On the return trip the team observed migrant housing all along the Gulf Coast of Texas and in Louisiana and Arkansas. Here the situation was not similar to that in the Valley. Houses were more run-down, and much smaller. Most were occupied, and from the number of children playing in the yards, the average occupancy of these one or two room dwellings must have been five or six. We visited a government labor camp on the outskirts of a small East Texas community. The camp housed both temporary and permanent families. The approximately 35 to 50 permanent houses were fairly good. The small homes averaged about four rooms, and were recently painted. In the temporary section of the camp, small galvanized iron dwellings, with screened porches were available. Water was obtained at outdoor spigots and there were community toilets, showers, and laundries. The houses were close together, and a considerable distance from the facilities. Screens had holes or were completely absent, and the only windows were shuttered, with no glass. Light in each house was provided by a single hanging bulb. Floors were concrete, and only a minimal amount of furniture was provided. This camp apparently was, however, one of the better ones available for the migrant.

Bracero Reception Center

All available data on the bracero situation led the team to the conclusion that some of its time in the Valley should be spent in an attempt to find out more about that program. The McAllen TEC office arranged for a tour of the Hidalgo Bracero Reception Center. Here the whole process through which the incoming Mexican worker must pass was observed: the medical center for blood test, skin check, delousing and chest x-rays; the dining hall for feeding the braceros (the same menu each day: chili, sandwiches, and potatoes at lunch; bacon, eggs, toast, potatoes and coffee for breakfast; and a sack lunch for the bus or truck trip to their place of employment); the housing center, another sheet iron building, which the guide stated was really useless because the men preferred to sleep outside; insurance agencies just off the federal property, where the grower could obtain for his workers the insurance required by law; the contracting center where the grower or his agent looks over the workers and determines which he will take; and finally the office building where the necessary paper work is done.

The Reception Center was in a slack period at the time of our visit. Only about 25 workers were being processed. The official in charge informed us that during the peak season, (June to September) the center processed up to 4000 workers per day. The center is financed by the growers, although it is federally owned and operated.

Having seen the operation on this side of the border, it was decided that it would be valuable to see the Monterrey, Mexico station through which all of the *braceros* entering the Valley for the first time pass. Unfortunately, the center was not operating on the day picked to visit Monterrey. The trip was not in vain, however, for a secondary goal was fulfilled. We had read much about the experiences of *braceros* in the United States, and about how they frequently would fulfill a 6 months contract having saved only $20 or so. Others, more fortunate, might make $300 or more, although how much was ever taken back into Mexico is questionable. Seeing the living conditions from which the *braceros* come made it clear why the program is so popular in Mexico. The poverty in evidence was so much worse than any seen in the Valley that there was no doubt as to why the Mexican worker would be willing at least to try his luck on the other side of the border.

MIGRANTS IN IOWA

During the course of the year migrant workers visit virtually every one of the continental states, although their numbers vary widely in different areas. Since this study was conducted from Iowa it would be remiss not to include a section concerning the migrants who come to that state even though it is among the lowest in number of migrants involved.

There are five Iowa counties in each of which one hundred or more migrants work at the peak of each harvest season.[15] These are shown in Table II below with the total number of migrant persons (including non-working dependents) and the number of workers. Cerro Gordo County, in the north central portion of the state, utilizes the mi-

Table II Iowa Counties in which migrants work, total number of migrants, and number of workers.

COUNTY	TOTAL PERSONS	WORKERS
Cedar	275	190
Cerro Gordo	110	80
Louisa	225	170
Muscatine	300	225
Scott	160	120
Total	1070	775

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[15] ----- Domestic Agricultural Migrants in the United States, Public Health Service Publication No. 540, Revised 1960.

grants primarily in the harvest of sugar beets. The remaining four counties are situated in southeast Iowa along the Mississippi River where vegetables, particularly tomatoes and cucumbers, are important crops. Since approximately 90 percent of the migrants coming to Iowa are concentrated in this area, it merits further consideration.

The city of Muscatine, in Muscatine County, lies on the Mississippi approximately in the center of this four county area. This strategic location, coupled with the existence of a cannery operated by the H. J. Heinz Company, make it the center of the local vegetable industry.

In addition to the approximately 1000 domestic migrants who go there, there are usually in excess of 100 braceros each year. In the summer and autumn of 1960 there were 174 of these Mexican nationals out of an estimated peak of 1500 migrants, including dependents.[16] Most of these persons are employed in the harvest of tomatoes and cucumbers grown on contract for the Heinz Company and in the processing of these products. Others harvest the watermelons and cantaloupe for which the area is widely known. Some come directly to the Muscatine area from Washington and California, but the majority come from Minnesota after finishing the cherry harvest there and the sugar beet harvest in Colorado. Fifty to sixty percent of the total return to this same area year after year. Following the completion of the harvest they go south or southwest to pick cotton.

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[16] It will be noted that there is a discrepancy between these figures and those given in Table II on the preceeding page. The reason is that the figures are estimates and come from different sources. The latter figures may include small numbers of migrants working in counties adjacent to the Muscatine area who are not included in the previously cited Public Health Service publication.

Early arrivals in southeast Iowa help with the weeding and cultivation of the crops they will later harvest, beginning about June first. The bulk of the migrants, however, arrive about a month later to begin the pickle harvest, or two months later to pick tomatoes. The cucumbers are finished around the end of the first week in September and the tomatoes about a month later, depending upon the time of the first killing frost.

Much that has been written here and elsewhere regarding the problems which the migrants face and which they bring to the communities in which they work simply does not apply in this Midwestern city of 19,000, despite the relatively large influx of these people. According to a local informant it is the Muscatine Migrant Council, operating with the cooperation of the Migrant Ministry of the National Council of Churches, which is largely responsible for such a great degree of harmony. Another important factor is the use of the Annual Worker Plan. That so many of the same workers return to the area, and that there is never any difficulty in securing a sufficient number of them for the harvest, attest to the good migrant-local citizen relations which prevail.

This is not accidental, but the result of planning and effort on the part of the townspeople, coupled with fair treatment by growers and the cannery.

The housing provided by the employers is not luxurious but is adequate for temporary habitation. That for the Mexican nationals is of course inspected to assure its meeting the requirements of Federal law and the remainder is comparable.

Wages are fair. For harvesting cucumbers the workers receive one-half the value of the crop. Tomatoes are picked on a piece-rate basis, stipulated for a five-eighths bushel hamper. The rate is sufficient for a diligent worker to make up to twenty or even twenty-five dollars per day. Crew leaders receive a bonus in addition to their earnings as harvest hands.

The H. J. Heinz Company cooperates with the Employment Service to assure the proper number of workers at the right time. About January first a Heinz representative visits the migrants in their home territory of southern Texas to recruit workers for the following season. He gives the migrants some idea of the number of workers who will be needed through the summer and early fall months, and Heinz receives a degree of assurance that a sufficient number will be available. Tentative agreements are made at this time and, barring any disrupting rumors which may reach them before they are to arrive in the Muscatine area, most of the migrants adhere to these agreements. Through its corresponding offices in other sections of the country, the Employment Service Office in Muscatine keeps in contact with the migrants, confirming their intention to come to Muscatine, and at the same time, informing the migrants of the local crop situation, including such details as crop conditions and more accurate estimates of the time of crop maturity and the number of workers who will be needed, as the harvest season approaches and more accurate estimates can be made.

The story of how a small city absorbs people of another national background and culture numbering nearly a tenth of its own population with a minimum of friction is not written in its fields and canneries alone. For in many communities, even with good relations between the migrants and their employers, those between the local public and the migrants break down. But such is not the case in Muscatine. "The migrants are well accepted here" can be heard in many places in that city and an important part of the answer to the question, "How does this happen?" is the Muscatine Migrant Council.

College students employed by the Migrant Ministry of the National Council of Churches supervise a child day-care center, looking after the young children of working parents. When a new migrant family arrives they are visited by a "Welcome Wagon" bearing not only good wishes, but also gifts contributed by local merchants. Parents are assured that their children are welcome in the local schools, and beyond that, that transportation to and from school will be provided for them. As a result, most of the migrant children in the area during the school session attend.

A local radio station offers a news broadcast each Saturday evening in Spanish, including news from Texas. There is also a Spanish devotional broadcast each Sunday morning. At least one of the local motion picture theaters shows Spanish movies during the harvest season. In the local branch of a large retail store and mail-order chain, one of the migrants works Friday evenings and Saturdays, helping to overcome the language barrier which confronts some of the workers and, of course, greatly furthering relations between the store and the migrants.

Each summer the Migrant Council sponsors a huge fiesta where townspeople and migrants gather together to eat great quantities of Mexican food, play games, and dance to a Mexican band. This is scheduled near the peak of the harvest, when the greatest number of workers will be on hand and is the highlight of the season.

These activities instituted by local leadership function in a number of ways to channel the interaction between the migrants and the townspeople. Since man is a social animal, his modes of behavior are determined by the expectations of the society in which he lives. When a person finds himself in a new situation where the modes of behavior are not already determined, as for instance, in his first contact with persons of another national or cultural origin, he is momentarily at a loss as to how society expects him to react. He is likely to look first to those whom he respects for guidance. These will probably be either leaders in the community or members of his peer group or both. If the community leaders have made their views known, these views will serve as the expectations of society for some individuals at least. From this beginning, these expectations will filter down through the "unconscious heirarchy of prestige," and horizontally through peer groups. In Muscatine the Migrant Council has served as the initiator of a favorable reaction to the migrants.

Charles H. Cooley has pointed out for us that we tend to view ourselves as we are led to feel that others view us, as judged by their behavior toward us. This "looking-glass self" in turn serves as a determinant of our behavior toward others. When the migrants coming to Muscatine find themselves respected as individuals, they are encouraged to behave in a respectable manner.

Spanish language motion pictures and radio broadcasts, along with the annual fiesta, serve as a tacit recognition, both to the local population and to the harvest workers, that there are positive values in the Mexican culture. It is not to be condemned or derided simply because it is different from that to which the local people are accustomed.

Thus mutual respect between the migrants and the townspeople, both personally and culturally, mark their relations during the harvest season.

It would be remiss to imply that Muscatine in harvest time is completely without troubles. Occasionally some of the Texas Mexicans will exceed their capacity for beer, become obstreperous, and spend the rest of the night in the local jail - but then, this has been known to happen among the local populace, too. Stealing and other forms of dishonesty among the Spanish-speaking temporary inhabitants are minimal. By and large they are recognized as responsible, respectable individuals, and as is almost always the case, respond by sincerely trying to live up to the reputation which they have as a group. Once in a while the Heinz Company loses the money which it advances occasionally to a crew leader for transportation, but not frequently enough to cause the company to stop the practice in cases of need.

Although the work of the Muscatine Migrant Council is voluntary, the response to it by the townspeople is not completely altruistic. The Council has done well their task of impressing upon the local citizens the importance of the migrants to their economy. It is obvious to those connected with the Heinz cannery and to the growers in the area that they are dependent upon the strong backs and arms which come each year to help get the produce from the fields to the market. But it is not quite so apparent to others that the migrants leave many of their dollars behind when the harvest is over, nor that the whole city benefits from the contribution which they make to the economic output of the fertile Mississippi River Valley.

Occasionally the complaint is heard that outside workers should not be brought in when local labor is available. Of course, the local labor supply could not begin to handle the tremendous task of the vegetable harvest without outside help. Beyond that fact, local workers, by and large, either would not or could not endure the rigors of day-long stoop labor. Furthermore, if they should try it, it is doubtful that their daily earnings would compare to those of workers more experienced and better conditioned muscularly than they.

Certainly the people of Muscatine have not eliminated their migrant problems completely. There is room for improvement and will be for years to come. But they are trying and they have shown that neither the problems of the migrants, nor those of the communities in which they work are insuperable. These problems will not disappear if they are ignored; and they cannot simply be wished away. Their reduction calls for planning and effort. Muscatine is one of the cities which has pointed the way.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The problems of the agricultural migrants have no single cause and it follows that no single corrective step can solve those problems. Many areas of need have been pointed out by numerous individuals and agencies acquainted with the migrants - education, housing, transportation, wages, and the opportunity for more continuous work, for example. A large number of recommendations have come from various sources for improvements in these areas and others, but unfortunately, relatively few have been acted upon.

The most daring suggestion would attack several of the core problems simultaneously. This suggestion is to eliminate the need for migration. It is based on the widely accepted premise that migrancy per se is the root of many if not most of the individual causes of migrants' problems. The workers are unable to vote because they do not live in one state long enough to be legal residents. Effective organization is difficult because of frequent moving. The children are not educated to the same level as non-migratory children, in part because of time spent working in the fields, but also in part because of lack of continuity of residence. The direct expense of travel plus the cost of lost work time reduce the already low earnings of the workers. Granted that "... migrant workers .... become migrant because they have already become poor,"[17] the facts nevertheless indicate that migrancy is not an effective solution to poverty.

A program to stabilize agricultural labor has widespread and growing support among persons who are familiar with the ramifications of migrancy. The widely accepted idea ".... that itinerant labor is needed to satisfy the peculiar demands of agriculture" has been challenged.[18] At the National Conference to Stabilize Migrant Labor held in Chicago November 21-22, 1959, there were several persons who voiced the opinion that by cooperative planning, crops in most areas of the country could be sufficiently diversified to offer nearly a full year of continuous employment to agricultural workers. The growers presumably would benefit at least as much under such a system as would the workers. Dr. Varden Fuller, Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of California, Berkeley, and Dr. Theodore W. Smith, Chairman of the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago shared this opinion, as did Miss Catherine Daly, a Michigan grower, and Mr. Frederick S. Van Dyke of California. Miss Daly and her neighbors already have diversified their farms sufficiently to offer virtual full-time employment to their workers.[19] The same is true of many growers in other areas but as yet the extent is too small to have any affect on the total migrant economy.

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[17] ---- Report to the President on Domestic Migratory Farm Labor, op. cit., p. 24.

[18] Ed Marciniak, Toward a National Policy for Migrant Labor, Report on the National Conference to Stabilize Migrant Labor held at Loyola University in Chicago and sponsored by the Catholic Council on Working Life, pamphlet, 1960.

The prospect of stable communities of agricultural workers serving growers within an approximately fifty mile radius, and the complete elimination of migrancy as a way of life is most attractive. However, certain difficulties lie between the present and the realization of that dream. Some of these difficulties concern relocation of the migrants, which, although not explicitly stated as part of the program, would undoubtedly be required of many of the persons affected.

However severe the rigors of the migrant's life may be, and however poor his home in the South may be, it is still home, with all the emotional connotations of the word. Mexican Americans, who comprise a large portion of the migrant labor category, are particularly attached to their relatives beyond the nuclear family. Such extended-family attachments rank high in the heirarchy of values in their sub-culture. To raise the value of material considerations above these attachments would mean a cultural change of considerable magnitude. Past failures of economically sound aid programs because cultural factors were not fully considered point up the need for careful groundwork in migrant resettlement.[20]

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[19] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

Certain areas of Anglo culture also need to be searched for possible stumbling blocks to an extensive resettlement program. How the receiving communities will accept the workers and their families, most of whom are minority group persons, needs to be determined, and a climate of acceptance obtained. Growers must be convinced of the benefits that will accrue to them by diversification in cooperation with other growers in a large area.

Finally, there is the very important question of financing such a far-reaching program. Who will pay for the necessary community preparation, provide the necessary new homes, and build the schools for the presently migrant children? Ultimately the initial expense must be borne by taxpayers, from whatever political level the funds come. Education of the public to the needs of farm workers and their rights as humans and as citizens must preceed the implementation of wide-spread farm labor resettlement in permanent locations.

Overcoming these obstacles will take time. Meanwhile the migrants' problems continue to press and oppress. While solutions to these obstacles are being worked out, solutions to the immediate problems must also be sought. Various state and private actions are in progress, but because of the interstate nature of migrant labor, federal activities are of greater over-all importance. Following are some of the legislative goals for 1961 of the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor pertinent to the problems outlined in this report.[21]

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[20] See Charles J. Erasmus, "An Anthropologist Looks at Technical Assistance," in Morton H. Fried,ed., Readings in Anthropology, Volume II: Cultural Anthropology, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1959.

1) Educational bills for children and adult migrants. These include federal aid to schools serving migrant children to assist with extra expenses incurred during periods of peak migrant influx. The adult program would assist with ".... practical training in the use of sanitary and training facilities available to them...."[22]

2) Minimum wage. As in their bill submitted in 1960, the subcommittee will request graduated yearly wage increases in 1961. However, provisions for retaining the piece-rate system will be added, and provisions allowing for regional adjustments are being considered.

3) Child labor. The subcommittee now considers the sixteen year age minimum requested in 1960 unrealistic and expects to offer a bill with a lower minimum and strict provisions to prohibit work during school hours by children of school age.

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[21] Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr. "New Perspective for 1961," an address at the Second Annual Conference on Families Who Follow the Crops, October 24, 1960. Mimeographed by the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

4) Migrant housing. Senator Williams in 1960 offered a bill to guarantee loans or to offer loans at low cost to "...official agencies and private nonprofit groups to offer satisfactory housing for farm workers." A new bill to be offered in 1961 will include provisions to cover the migrant who wishes to become a home owner and also for the worker who may spend the entire year at one farm.[23]

In addition to these specific bills which the subcommittee intends to place before the Congress during its 1961 session, the subcommittee is studying two other areas where it feels that federal legislation may be needed for:

> ....help to the states in dealing with special interstate problems on unemployment compensation and workmen's compensation, (and) ....an amendment to the child welfare laws to provide more practical distribution of federal monies for day-care centers and other services for migrant children.[24]

Senator Williams concluded his address with the presentation of an outlined program for stabilizing the agricultural worker. He touched upon the establishment of permanent residence, but most of this portion dealt with a recruitment program for domestic workers following the basic lines of that used in the bracero program. It would include reception centers, government-guaranteed contracts, and a revolving fund to bear the expense, supported by recruitment fees.

All the above proposals of Senator Williams and his subcommittee have some merit. Of particular interest are the additional provisions to be added to this year's housing bill, which would promote the establishment of a non-migratory farm labor force. To the author of this report the continuance of the piece-rate wage system seems undesirable, but perhaps the Senator and his fellow subcommittee members judge from past experience that this provision is essential for the passage of their bill. If this is the case the compromise is well worth while.

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[23] _Ibid_., p. 5.

[24] _Ibid_.

The President's Committee on Migratory Labor also offers some valuable and realistic recommendations for future action. The committee currently has underway a new approach, the Earning Opportunities Forum for Migrants, which

> ....calls for coordinated action by local public agencies, voluntary organizations and employers in providing employment opportunities and the counseling and training necessary to qualify the migrant for placement in suitable employment.[25]

Belle Glade, Florida and San Antonio, Texas are now operating such programs on a demonstration basis with support from state committees, the U. S. Department of Labor, and the President's Committee. If these demonstrations show the new approach to be effective it will be expanded to include other geographical areas.

The President's Committee recognizes the importance of two recent recommendations of the Advisory Council on Public

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[25] ----- Report to the President on Domestic Migratory Farm Labor, op. cit., p. 10.

Assistance to the situation of the migrants. One of these would amend the Social Security Act to make federal grants available to states for assistance to needy persons regardless of reason for need. The other would make federal grants-in-aid available only to assistance programs which impose no residence requirements.[26]

In accord with the newest orientation toward migrant problems, the President's Committee offers six suggestions for reducing the need for migrancy:

> 1. Rural development or industrial development in rural areas of substantial labor surplus.
>
> 2. Education and training of migrants so that they may be better equipped to compete for permanent year-round employment.
>
> 3. Increased mechanization of harvesting operations to cut down on the need for short-term seasonal workers.
>
> 4. Diversification of crops in areas now specializing in one or two crops requiring large amounts of seasonal labor.
>
> 5. Movement of migrants only on the basis of reliable job information.
>
> 6. Expansion of local farm labor recruitment including well supervised day haul and youth employment programs.[27]

This author agrees wholeheartedly with the advisability of all the above recommendations with the exception of number three. Migrant labor as a phenomenon exists because there is both a supply of and a demand for migrant workers. The supply is present because there are people who need work -

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26 Ibid., p. 22.

27 Ibid., p. 24.

any kind of work that will provide some financial remuneration. These are the people who need help to adapt to a better way of life. Increased competition from machines would only worsen their plight. The migrants must be lifted out of migrancy, not squeezed out, for there is no lower place for them to go. Mechanization will increase with an improvement in the position of the migrant, and with no hardships to the growers comparable to those now endured by the migrant.

Public Law 78 is intended to assure a farm labor supply for peak seasonal needs and also to protect domestic workers from the adverse effects of competition with foreign labor. In practice, it appears from data from numerous sources that the second purpose is too often sacrificed to the first. Those persons seeking workers have tremendously more influence with employment service personnel than do those seeking work. The 50 cent per hour minimum stipulated for braceros, with no minimum for domestic workers, short-tethers domestics' wages to that figure wherever the bracero supply is abundant, and indirectly also in areas more distant from Mexico. The authors feel that the second purpose of Public Law 78 needs more careful enforcement, and further, that protection in terms of working and living conditions similar to those given to foreign workers should be offered to domestics. The Annual Worker Plan should be extended to assure maximum employment opportunities to domestic workers and to decrease the "paper" labor shortages which reportedly bring many Mexican nationals into the United States each year.

Americans operating family-size farms need to be made aware of their competitive position in relation to the large growers who employ great amounts of low-cost labor, both domestic and foreign. Growers employing migrants should be informed of the benefits to themselves of crop diversification, both in terms of the distribution of crop risks and of maintaining a stable labor supply. Encouragement should also be given to the growers to utilize their organizations more for purposes of produce marketing agreements and less for delaying the improvement of the migrants' situation. Obviously a humanitarian appeal alone will not suffice; the advantages of having available ambitions, healthy, self-respecting workers must be emphasized.

SUMMARY

There are several factors related to the situation of America's agricultural migrants which require a constructive approach if that situation is to be improved. One such factor is education. The migrant cannot find permanent full-time employment in large measure because he does not possess the requisite skills. There is also to be considered the fact that he is typically of a minority group. Because of his minority group membership he needs a greater degree of job skill than a white Anglo American in order to compete successfully. Yet, because he must migrate, and because wages are not sufficient for the head of the family to support the family alone, usually both parents, and often the children as well, must work in the fields; or if not in the fields, then usually in the labor camp, caring for younger brothers and sisters. Even in cases where children do not work the lack of education on the part of the parents may lead them to neglect making any effort to enroll the children in local schools during the harvest season. Often, too, local schools, due to prejudice against the migrants, lack of any feeling of responsibility, shortages of school space and of teachers, or a combination of these factors, make little or no effort to see that the migrant children in their communities are in school. Consequently, these children are not getting the education they must have to break out of the migrant pattern in which they are being reared.

There are also health problems, both of a preventive and of a curative nature. Sanitation is largely a matter of education, rather than economics. Yet, if there are times when a mother is unsure of what she can set before her family at meal time, it is not likely that she will be overly concerned about the cleanliness of the plates or whether her children's hands are freshly washed. If a family finds work where there are beds to sleep in and a roof over their heads after living for a week in their truck they are unlikely to be bothered by a few flies or bugs. When wages are low and the number of work days are limited, one cannot be selective about the perquisites that go with the job. If illness strikes, often as a result of poor sanitation practices and facilities, lack of funds is a powerful deterrent to seeking medical aid. Few people care to accumulate bills they know they cannot pay, even for needed services. So going to see a doctor is postponed as long as possible, sometimes complicating what began as a fairly simple infection or illness.

Prejudice has already been mentioned in conjunction with education. It also has other ramifications. Many communities look with disfavor upon those of darker complexion who come to harvest their crops. They may be tolerated from a distance because of the realization of the essential part they play in the local economy, but contact is usually limited to situations in which the local people find such contact to their advantage. There is seldom any real effort to understand these dark strangers as people, they are just "different." Since the distance between the migrant and the local citizen is socio-economic as well as ethnic, discrimination is intensified by the migrant's low economic status. Ethnocentrism, the conviction of the superiority of one's own group, plays an important part also, since its opposite side is that different groups are necessarily inferior. Cultural differences, for instance speaking Spanish, or English with a strange accent, likewise indicates that these people are "outsiders." As such, they may be the objects of unsympathetic attention by persons who are looking for justifications for their prejudices.

The vicious cycle of ignorance and poverty breeding ignorance and poverty has been mentioned by implication. This mechanism has the effect of perpetuating migration as a way of life in succeeding generations. There also is another cycle in the typical migrant family which keeps them on the road year after year. They return to their home at the end of the harvest season with perhaps a few hundred dollars saved while they were on the road, if they have been fortunate. With part of this they pay off their creditors, hoping that the rest may be saved toward the beginning of a small family business which will enable them to remain at home, or at least will tide them over until sufficient work is available locally. Perhaps next year they won't have to migrate. But the hopes of local employment do not materialize; soon the nest-egg is used up, and by the beginning of the next harvest season, they owe the grocer for their winter's food and the garage man for repairs on their pick-up. When the local harvest is in, they resignedly pack up and head north. There may be work for them there. Perhaps in another year.. .

Whatever problems of the agricultural migrant may be chosen for consideration they will invariably be found to have his position of economic disadvantage as a main contributing factor. While farm labor wages have risen in recent years, the increase and the resulting wage have been the least of any occupational grouping in the country. Many persons are quick to place the blame on the grower; yet he is not entirely at fault since he is subject to "the cost-price squeeze " Efforts of growers' associations have not, however, been directed toward changes which would improve both their own lot and that of their workers. On the contrary, they, along with nation-wide farm organizations such as the Farm Bureau Federation, have opposed changes in legislation which would give farm workers inclusion under the minimum wage provision of the Fair Labor Practices Act and other social legislation. Growers in many areas have found it advantageous to import Mexican nationals under Public Law 78 instead of hiring domestic workers, and have according to numerous reports used unethical and illegal means to secure the necessary certification to hire braceros. The claim that there are not enough domestics available for peak labor needs is valid. But it is most unfortunate that this claim has been used as an excuse for the importation of foreign labor to compete with domestics during off-peak seasons.

Few migrants follow the crops simply because they enjoy travel. They are forced to do so by lack of local work opportunities. Although there are notable exceptions, the conditions under which they must live and work while they are migrating are, for the most part, not of a variety to attract to this life those able to earn a living in any other way.

One small source of encouragement is the Annual Worker Plan, successful for many workers in reducing the uncertainty of their itinerary and the lost time between jobs. But this is far from sufficient to offset such bleak realities as a declining wage relative to the rest of our economy, displacement by machinery, political impotence, exclusion from social legislation coverage, competition with foreign labor, and oppressive opposition on virtually all counts by strongly organized pressure groups. Numerically, the migrants are not a very large segment of our population, but their problems are far out of proportion to their numbers. The fact that they are relatively few should stand as an encouragement to securing for them the benefits which other occupational groupings enjoy but which the migrants are presently denied.

Long range goals for migrant agricultural workers should be aimed at converting them to a permanently located labor supply dispersed throughout the areas they now serve as migrants. Advance planning should minimize travel and offer them full employment. It may be that this is somewhat unrealistic even as a long-range goal; perhaps our farm economy will need at least a small number of migrants for a long time to come. If so, this need should be met to the fullest extent possible by single workers, domestic and, if necessary, imported. Entire families should not be required to follow the crops, with all the disadvantage to their children which now prevails. Until such a system becomes a reality, public and private agencies interested in the migrants must continue to make the facts, however unpleasant, known to the public. Only in this way can the necessary support be gained to improve the lot of America's migrants.

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